

House Votes 406-19 to End Long-Standing Exemption from Anti-Trust Laws

(Washington, DC) -- U.S. Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Milwaukee) today voted to lower health insurance premiums for families by ending health insurance companies' long-standing exemption from anti-trust laws.

Congresswoman Moore said, **"We stand with families who have seen their health insurance premiums go up again and again. By making health insurers play by the same rules as everyone else we will increase competition – which will lead to lower costs, better quality and more choices for consumers."**

Health insurance companies have been exempt from anti-trust laws since 1945. This blanket exemption shields these companies from legal accountability for anti-competitive practices such as price fixing, collusion, and sabotage in order to gain a monopoly.

According to the American Medical Association, the health insurance markets in 24 out of 43 states included in a recent study are dominated by two insurance companies that control more than 70 percent of the market. This is a jump from last year's report where this was the case in 18 out of 42 states.

Congresswoman Moore continued, **"The facts are clear. Competition barely exists in some markets. Our families deserve better and this moves us in the right direction."**

This action comes on recent news of an insurance company in California proposing to raise individual premiums by 39 percent. The Center for American Progress (CAP) today noted that this is not an isolated example and that WellPoint, a national health insurance company, could be raising premiums by double digits in at least 11 states, including Wisconsin. CAP reports that some Wisconsinites with health insurance from WellPoint subsidiaries could see rate increases of over 17 percent.

The House passed the Health Insurance Industry Fair Competition Act by a vote of 406-19, and it now goes to the Senate for consideration.

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For an interview with Congresswoman Gwen Moore, please contact David Frey at 202-225-4572.